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THE EPIPHANY:
A SEATONIAN PRIZE POEM.

BY

WILLIAM BOLLAND, M.A.

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.



Ἄσκη ἀρίζηλος ἀλαβινὸν
Ἄνδρ' ἐφείγος.

PIND. OL. 2. L. 101.

QUEM NUNCIABAT SIDERUM PRÆSENTIA
REGEM UNIVERSIS NUPER ORTUM GENTIBUS.

M. HIERON. VIDÆ HYMN. 18.



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MIRACLES:

A SEATONIAN PRIZE POEM.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
HENRY ADDINGTON,
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
AND
HIGH STEWARD OF THE BOROUGH OF READING,
THIS POETICAL ESSAY ON
THE EPIPHANY
IS WITH ALL RESPECT INSCRIBED
BY HIS MOST OBEDIENT,
AND MOST OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,

MIDDLE TEMPLE,
JAN. 11, 1799.

W. BOLLAND.



THE EPIPHANY:

A P O E M.

THY praise, O Sun, who, by th' Almighty's hand
Fix'd in the centre of this spacious world,
Sitst thron'd in splendor, and with fost'ring care
Pour'st, from thy stores of undiminish'd fire,
Light, warmth and nourishment on helpless Man:
Or thine, O Moon, that with a paler ray,
Tho' not less friendly, 'mid the solemn gloom,
When Darkness casts it's mantle o'er the Earth,

A

And

And Nature sleeps in peace, serenely fair
Risest, in simple majesty array'd,
With silver lustre from the face of Heaven
To chase the dusky clouds, disarming Night
Of half her terrors ; — grateful would I sing—
For well your names deserve a nobler lay !
Nor you the muse forgets, ye brilliant Host !
That, o'er the vast, immeasurable tract
Of firmament with just arrangement spread,
Spangle the wide expanse ; Whether to Men,
As Planets known, that round their central Sun
Move in harmonious order ; or those spheres
Of wand'ring flame, that, with portentous glare,
Beyond the reach of mortal knowledge “roll
Spaces incomprehensible ;” or those
Minuter fires fix'd in remotest air

At

At distance so immense their fading gleam
Scarce twinkles on the philosophic eye.

BUT tho' the glorious theme might well command
Th' obedient Muse to strike the silent string;
Tho' Fancy, pond'ring o'er the grand design
Of Nature's work, burns with a fond desire
To paint the beauties of the glowing scene,
Creation's Fourth great Miracle, yet still
A brighter blaze bursts on her ravish'd sight,
Calls forth her powers, and tunes the tongue to praise:
That wond'rous star, that, in the eastern sky
Majestic rising, to Judea's land
Trac'd it's illumin'd path to mark the clime,
From whence, as erst by holy Prophet told,

To Israel should a mighty Prince be born,
The King and Saviour of a fallen Race.

O THOU ! pure essence of etherial Light,
Thou Morning Star of Immortality !
How shall I tell the blessings, which thy rays
Diffus'd on mortals ? At thy rising rose
The Sun of Mercy, and to man unbarr'd
The crystal portals of Eternal Day :
Death stood aghast, and dropt his venom'd spear,
Content to wound, no longer to destroy ;
Tremendous echoing thro' her deepest vaults,
And caves of blackest night, the conquer'd Grave
Heav'd a convulsive groan ; as of that hour
Prophetic, when from her exhaustless womb

Millions

Millions shall rise to second life, the heirs
Of wealth divine, and never ending joy !

By anxious hopes inspir'd with raptur'd eyes
The Nations saw the long expected sign ;
And prompt to pay the adoration due,
A pious band of sages from the East,
With choicest gifts, and richest treasures stor'd,
Bent to Jerusalem their destin'd course :
Whether from Persia's distant clime they came,
Where Caucasus, aspiring mountain, rears
His cloud-capt head ; and giant Ararat,
Upon the mirror of Araxes' wave,
Throws his stupendous image : or that land,
On which in earliest time the Sons of men,
With impious hands, and bold presumption, rais'd

Babel's

Babel's proud tower, that first vain monument
Of mad Ambition: or the torrid plains,
Where parch'd Arabia to the solar blaze
Expands her sandy bosom; or those vales,
Refresh'd by many a stream, where Tigris winds
His mazy way, and vast Euphrates rolls
A sea of waters—my uncertain Pen
Recounts not:—Soon as jealous Herod heard
That journeying Sages sought a new born Prince,
And hail'd him Israel's monarch, he conven'd
The Priests and learned Elders of the state,
That from their gather'd wisdom he might find
What place should boast the blest Messiah's birth;
Inform'd that Bethlehem was the chosen spot
By Micah sung, the King in secret met
Th' enquiring strangers, and with strictest search

Bade

Bade them to seek the promis'd child, that He,
With regal pomp adorn'd, might issue forth
To offer worship to the infant Prince.

O MATCHLESS Hypocrite! Thy cruel mind
Was ne'er enlighten'd by the faintest spark
Of pure devotion! O'er a Saviour's fate
Murder sat brooding, and with hellish art
Beneath Religion's borrow'd vest conceal'd
Ambition's thirsty dagger! For thy Pride,
By rage inflam'd, and power's insatiate lust,
Could little brook a rival near the throne.
Upon thy brow Judea's diadem,
By lawless force usurp'd, sat tremulous;
And in thy hand the bloodstain'd sceptre shook.
Tyrant! Thy eyes shall see at that dread day,

When

When at the bar of an all-judging God
Thou stand'st arraign'd, when Bethlehem's slaughter'd babes
With lisping tongues shall testify thy crimes,
And weeping mothers on thy guilty head
Call loud for vengeance, then shalt thou behold
That infant Saviour, that forgiving Lord,
The Sinner's Advocate; — His bounteous love
Shall, at that awful hour, extend it's grace
E'en to a wretch like thee, shall plead thy cause
All-eloquent, and with a parent's zeal
(O boundless Mercy!) stretch his saving arm
To snatch thy soul from everlasting Death.

As, when of old the Sons of Israel fled
From Pharaoh's wrath, and o'er the trackless wild
Of Etham's waste pursued their dubious march,

Before

Before the camp a fiery pillar mov'd,
Divinely bright, to guide their erring steps,
And point to paths secure; so, when thy gates,
Jerusalem, pour'd forth th' illustrious train
Of Sages, that benignant Star, whose beams
First led them in a foreign land to seek
Th' expected King, to Bethlehem's honor'd walls
With faithful light held it's directing course.
Joyful they saw, and follow'd; 'till on high
Sudden th' auspicious meteor stopt it's flight,
And o'er the sainted habitation hung
It's heavenly lamp.— They enter'd; but no roof
By marble columns propt, no fretted dome
Of rich device, and costly workmanship,
No spacious chamber, on whose lofty sides,
Or by the Painter's art, or curious hand

Of skilful Semptress wrought, th' heroic tale
Spoke from the canvas, or in tapestry breath'd
With mimic life,—receiv'd the goodly throng;
But in a simple dwelling's meanest room
Their prince they found.—There on a Mother's knee,
His only Throne, in artless innocence
The Babe sat smiling:—Monarchs of the Earth!
Turn not disdainful from this humble scene;
Though o'er his limbs no Tyrian purple flow'd
In graceful folds, nor from his circled head
The diamond glitter'd or the ruby blaz'd;
(Mere pomp, and outward signs of royalty)
Yet was his Glory greater far, than that
Of scepter'd Solomon on ivory throne,
With Ophir's gold inlaid, high-seated, when
To hear his Wisdom, from the farthest south,

Sheba's

Sheba's fair Queen with homage due appear'd.
'Tis not a Crown (so happy Britons feel)
Bespeak the King; but Dignity of mind,
Imperial Virtue! — At his infant feet
Prostrate they fell; then from their caskets took
The precious treasures, Frankincense, whose sweets
Perfume Sabæa's gale, and fragrant Myrrh
Wept by Arabian shrub, and purest Gold,
An ample Offering: these with liberal hands
Presented and each mark of worship paid,
Each rite perform'd, back to their native homes
The favour'd Sages took their peaceful way.

O greatly good and justly titled wise!
First in the catalogue of Learning's sons,
Deep-graven by the master-hand of Truth,



Your names shall live to teach presumptuous minds,
That Man's best Wisdom is — To know his God!
O heavenly fount! how far thy lucid spring
Transcends the muddy source, from whence mankind
Drink earthly Knowledge! Not the viewless height
Of Teneriffe, compar'd to some small hill
Rais'd by the mole, blind miner, can present
A wider contrast: Not th' Atlantic main
Surpasses more the scantiest rivulet,
That pours it's shallow tribute to his shore.
He, who with patient toil consumes the lamp
At midnight, and o'er dusty records pores
Laborious, to descry with nice research
The arts and manners of departed days;
Or, who, with zeal more active, sallies forth
To traverse seas and lands unknown before;

Who

Who views with equal eye the gather'd snows
Of frozen Zembla, or the scorching sands
Of Zaara's desert, who, by nought seduc'd
From his firm purpose, boldly presses on,
And from th' Equator to the distant Poles,
Opening the World's great volume, with delight
Reads living Nations — He his health, his hours,
His substance wastes to raise a tott'ring pile
Of useless knowledge, if he knows not Him,
Who moves, informs, and animates the Whole:
'Tis Ignorance all! all Vanity! and serves
To lecture children and make ideots stare.

APPROACH, ye Proud! who cradled in the lap
Of soft indulgence, and of titles, wealth,
And power possest thro' Pleasure's flowery meads

Unthinking

Unthinking rove, nor, from the fond pursuit
A moment pause to contemplate that God,
Who showers each blessing on your worthless heads;
Approach! and from adoring Sages learn
Th' instructive lesson of Humility!
'Tis not the tinsell'd robe of gay parade,
Nor the loud plaudits of a thousand tongues;
'Tis not to shine in Courts, or to command
Th' attentive ears of listening Senators;
'Tis not the laurel in the tented field
Pluckt amid wounds and death, Nor that renown,
Transcendent tho' it's value, which awaits
Those gallant chiefs, to thy maternal arms,
Britannia, justly dear, who o'er the waves
With dauntless courage have to victory led
Thy floating bulwarks, and to hostile shores
Thund'ring

Thund'ring defiance whisper'd peace to thine;
'Tis not these mark'd distinctions can alone
Ennoble Man, and fit him for the Skies;
No! 'tis that inward worth, which passing shew
Directs to good; that modest purity,
That breathes it's hallow'd influence o'er the heart,
And wakes it to devotion; that, amid
The scoffs, and censures of an idle world,
Strengthens the just resolve, which bids us e'en
(If heaven demands so large a sacrifice)
Our fortune, friends, and country to forego,
And like the Sages, whom the Muse has sung,
Brave every danger in the cause of God.

BRIGHT Emanation of that hallow'd Fire
Circling celestial Majesty, which God

So

So oft has chosen to impart his will,
Thou—Messenger of bliss, how this exceeds
Thy former missions! When to Abraham sent
Thy flame consum'd the parted sacrifice;
Or from the burning bush on Horeb's top
Beam'd forth divine commands, or from the rock
In Jezreel's vale on Gideon's doubting mind
Conviction flash'd, then was thy partial aid
Exerted to defend the single tribe
Of wand'ring Israel; but when o'er the plains
Of Bethlehem thy conducting lustre shone,
A guardian Saviour smil'd amid thy beams,
His promise Heaven's rewards, a World his care!

LIFT up your heads, ye everlasting Gates,
The King of Glory comes! He comes to clothe

This

V. 2 dele (—)

This mortal in the unperishable garb
Of Immortality! Hear it, ye Dead,
Hear the glad tidings! and with trembling hope
Expect that day, when, at th' Archangel's trump,
From the long sleep of many thousand years
Ye shall awake,—awake to sleep no more;
Hear it, O living Man! Ere greedy Death
Consigns thee to the prison of the Tomb,
Hear and be wise! seek thy Redeemer's throne;
On bending knees implore his healing grace,
Chaunt forth his praise, and venerate his name.
Behold his life, and learn from him to live;
In death still greater view thy bleeding Lord,
And imitate that worth, thou canst not reach.
Smooth are his paths, and to conduct thy feet
The Gospel's holy light around thee sheds
It's mild effulgence. There behold thy God,

C

Nor

Nor from the radiant Guide avert thy Eyes,
Tho' dangers threaten, and collecting clouds,
Big with impending fate, obscure the sky.
For though upon the troubled waves of Life,
Tost by the gale, thy shatter'd vessel drifts
At the rude mercy of contending storms;
Though on thy sight th' horizon blackens round,
The Thunders roar, and Hell's capacious jaws
Seem opening to devour thee—coward like
Quit not thy post, nor suffer dark Despair
To paralyze the vigor of thy arm!
Seize the deserted helm, and on that Star
Of more than solar glory—fix thy gaze!
Led by it's favoring ray to calmer seas,
Fann'd by the breeze of Faith thy bark shall glide
To the blest haven of Eternal Peace.



ERRATA.

Page 3. Line 1...place a Comma after *immense*.

Page 6. Line 13. for (;) put (.)

Page 11. Line 3. for *Bespeak*—read *Bespeaks*.

Page 12. Line 4. for *source*—read *source*.

— 8. for *Altanic*, read *Atlantic*.

Page 16. Line 2. dele (—)

ERRATA.

Page 3. Line 1. "The" should be "The".
Page 3. Line 2. "The" should be "The".
Page 3. Line 3. "The" should be "The".
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Page 3. Line 9. "The" should be "The".
Page 3. Line 10. "The" should be "The".

A CLAUSE of Mr. SEATON'S WILL.

Dated OCT. 8, 1738.

I Give my Kislingbury Estate to the University of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which shall be disposed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Master of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Professor for the time being, or any two of them shall agree. Which three persons aforesaid shall give out a Subject, which Subject shall for the first Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and so the succeeding Years, till the Subject is exhausted; and afterwards the Subject shall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of Heart, &c. or whatever else may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Clare-Hall, and Greek Professor, to be most conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they shall yearly dispose of the Rent of the above Estate to that Master of Arts, whose Poem on the Subject given shall be best approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in English, and to be printed; the expence of which shall be deducted out of the product of the Estate, and the residue given as a reward for the Composer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verses.

WE the underwritten do assign Mr. SEATON'S Reward, for the Year 1798, to WILLIAM BOLLAND, M. A. of Trinity College, for his Poem on THE EPIPHANY; and direct the said Poem to be printed according to the Tenor of the Will.

November 2,
1798.

R. T. Cory, Vice-Chancellor.
J. Torkington, Master of Clare-Hall.

7 JUN 52

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